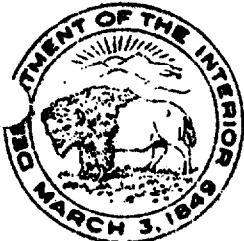


FY 1956

Office
file
7/1



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release JULY 4, 1955

WATERFOWL NESTING SUCCESSFUL IN MOST BREEDING AREAS

Reports from Fish and Wildlife Service biologists working in the Canadian prairie provinces show that the breeding duck populations there are the highest in recent years and that nesting conditions generally appear to be favorable for the production of young, Director John L. Farley said today.

Early migration of the wild ducks and geese combined with good surface-water and delayed plowing by farmers set the scene for the successful nesting by most species, the reports indicate.

The Service biologists report that when migrating waterfowl moved northward in the spring they found drought conditions in the north-central States and moved on into Canada where they found unusually favorable conditions.

In portions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba the birds found the highest water levels on record. Frequent rains have maintained these levels. As a result of the wet weather farmers have delayed their plowing which ordinarily destroys a considerable number of waterfowl nests at this time of year, and the majority of first nesting attempts have been spared.

Breeding-ground studies are being conducted throughout North America by the Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Provincial game branches, State fish and game departments, Ducks Unlimited, and the Wildlife Management Institute. A forecast of fall flights from Canada and other continental breeding areas is being sought between now and the middle of August in order that appropriate hunting regulations may be set for the 1955-56 waterfowl season. Because the regulations are drafted on a flyway (flight route) basis, emphasis is being placed, as usual, on developing an index to the number of birds that will be traveling down each of the four flyways (Pacific, Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic) during the southward migration which coincides with the hunting season.

Conditions in specific areas covered to date, according to the reports, have been as follows:

Saskatchewan.—Breeding waterfowl here have reached the highest populations recorded in the past few years. An early season, along with weather conditions favorable to waterfowl but unfavorable to farming activities, indicates that most waterfowl species will be successful in rearing their young. This applies particularly to the important mallard and pintail duck species.

Manitoba.--Conditions here have been quite similar to those in Saskatchewan. The breeding populations have shown considerable increases over last year. Water and weather both appear to favor production. Unless conditions change, a good crop should move southward from Manitoba in the fall.

Alberta.--Although Alberta generally has an earlier season than the other two prairie Provinces, this was not the case this spring. Movement of birds into Alberta was somewhat delayed, as a result. Water conditions were about average. Weather during May discouraged farming activity and favored a strong hatch from first nesting attempts in the western and north-central portions of the Province. To the east and south there has been some threat of drought. On the whole, however, production in Alberta should be good this year.

Eastern Canada.--Drought conditions in western Quebec, along with late breeding in eastern Quebec and Labrador, have resulted in prospects described as no better than average for waterfowl broods during the course of the summer.

Northern States.--Drought conditions in Nebraska, South Dakota, western Iowa, southern and western Minnesota, and southern North Dakota during most of May resulted in a marked reduction in breeding populations and poor prospects for nesting.

x x x